the Gujarat High Court in this regard. Necessary action in the matter is taken by the Central Government only on receipt of such a proposal.

Filing of Annual Accounts by companies

4673. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than one lac companies have not filed their Annual Accounts for more than 2 years; and

(b) if so, what penal action under the law is being taken for default in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Under section 220 of the Companies Act, 1956 the Registrars of Companies are competent to launch prosecutions against the defaulting companies. Registrars of Companies have launched 16956 prosecutions under this section.

Pending Contempt of Court cases

†4674. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Contempt of Court cases pending at present in the country;

(b) whether there is any proposal to review the Contempt of Courts Act;

(c) if so, whether any proposal to make the provisions of Contempt of Courts Act more stringent is under Government's consideration; and

(d) if so; the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) As per available information, 55, 737 Contempt of Court cases are pending in various High Courts of the country as in December, 1999.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Various provisions under the Contempt of Courts Act 1971 were reviewed recently in pursuance of the recommendations of the P. C. Jain Commission to review old Acts/Rules and it was decided not to amend the Act of 1971, for the present.

Open Ballot System for Elections

4675. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any consultations are going on between the Law and Home Ministries with regard to proposed introduction of an open ballot system to curb rampant use of reported money power in elections recently;

(b) whether the Law Minister has informed the Home Minister that no Constitutional amendment is required as the change could be effected by amendment of some existing rules, as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 6th April 2000; and

(c) if so what final decisions Government have taken so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) to (c) In the recently held biennial elections to Rajya Sabha, certain issues like cross-voting and use of money power have attracted much attention. Though some corrective steps, like introduction of open ballot system at these elections, have been suggested, proposals in this regards have, however, not taken any concrete shape so far. In this connection, in response to an informal query by the Home Minister, I have indeed written to him expressing therein my personal views. However, the question being important and sensitive, requires thorough examination before taking any final decision in the matter.

Change in the Principles for Appeals

4676. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have changed the principles for appeals in the High Courts;